



## Just In Case

2014 / S. LaRue / Alb., NM / Unpublished

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18 pages / 9479 words / un-numbered chapters / 12 point Liberation Serif / One photographic image – page 1 – American Boy Scout troupe involved in semaphore communication studies, Public Domain image, still shot from educational film.

## Synopsis:

Autobiographical; a troubled lifetime re-examined. Less philosophy than usual, emotive and introspective. Vitriol delivered sans the usual 'nudge, nudge' inflection. Not much frolicking is evident; the voice is resigned, the usual humor aspect is missing, less 'fun with English' offered. A little schizophrenic when speaking with himself, but the missive would fail without said duality implied. Begins scattered. Ends well.

## Topics:

- Communication and the issues around its successful implementation in order to reap the harvests of successful relationships with others
- Music of the 1960s
- Extended Metaphor
- Automobile restoration
- Monsters featured in Japanese horror films of the 1950s and 1960s
- The internal combustion engineer
- The Human Brain
- The Paranormal
- Religion / Fantasy



## Just In Case

*S. LaRue – 01/2014*

### It's All Like This

I consider the last 12 to 16 months of my 58 year tenure producing CO<sub>2</sub>, stumbling around and screwing things up on our little spherical sewer, as the most important time of my life. I'm of the opinion my suicidal escapades failed to render the desired result so I could experience a dormant yet rather muscular portion of my brain springing to life.

I might mention here, it did not awaken willingly — I'm no fool, and neither is my Noggin-Chimp. Mr. Snoozy was well aware, once wrested from his opium-nightmare-slumber, there would be a mountain of horse shit to sift thru using only a plastic fork and some toothpicks.

All this time, my pretending-to-be-inoperative-reasoning-area knew the answers to most of the burning questions which had been eating me alive for 58 years. I've never been a dumbass, well not an overtly obvious one anyway, but my reasoning center knows me, didn't trust I'd act accordingly when it offered up the answers to questions I'd brought my Earthly undertakings to a screeching halt, in order to devote my every waking moment to finding, understanding and making repairs if possible.

It was waiting for the right time — waiting for me to approach my 57<sup>th</sup> birthday — before joining the party. I've managed a level of *adept* at almost all I've attempted since I drew my first breath — walking away from what promised to be the biggest slugfest since WWII just ain't the way I do bidness. Mr Know-it-all wants to deliver? Think's the time is at long-last ripe for his charge to hear some shit that might rattle his cage? Bring it. Born ready, was I.

### Prequel

It took several women 100 years of repeatedly stabbing me in the neck with professionally sharpened ice picks as they cycled in and out of my orbit, before I finally broke. And when I toppled, through a carefully considered and executed set of circumstances which were my doing, and mine alone, it was sensational in every sense of the word.

Even I was shocked at the depth of the hole I'd dug just so I could dive in landing squarely on my head, several hundred feet below the Earth's crust; so deep no ladder would reach me. Navy Seals would not be excitedly summoned to employ their impeccable repelling skills. “MAN DOWN!” wasn't uttered by

a single soul; no caring, sympathetic heart, no brother in arms, was in attendance, not a friend in sight.

I was at the center of a 1000 mile radius of utter disregard and contempt, something I'd worked hard to establish yet hadn't noticed until I plummeted headlong into the gash in the Earth I'd dug with my bare hands.

Spectators watching me feverishly dig the hole gazed down at my limp body, arms folded across their chest, gave each other a knowing glance and briskly departed to attend the celebration of my demise wherein nary an opportunity to high-five would be denied.

The first *official* gathering of the “***I Hate Steve LaRue Club***”<sup>x</sup> transpired and the funny part is, I planned the fucking party. Paid for it, sent the invitations, arranged transportation in such a covert way I barely remember doing it, but I sure as fuck did. Bitches were partying on my dime. From my broken, wretched, worthless heart, now positioned well below sea level, I silently encouraged them to have a third shrimp cocktail.

As I lay there waiting for the (pre-paid) bulldozer I'd ordered for that afternoon to fill in the hole I was at the bottom of, the blow I'd sustained when landing was sufficient enough that I actually heard a tiny yet grouchy voice in my head; “ALRIGHT! ***ENOUGH ALREADY!!!!*** I'm up, ***I'm up*** — Jesus H. ***FUCKING*** Christ.”

It went on to say, “I'm guessing we'll be 57 in a couple-uh months? Lovely — time to make the donuts. Gimme a gawdamn cigarette...”

## And make the donuts, we did

Here we've sat, going on 16 months, hammering out the details around my subconscious agendas, their origins and their effects on myself and those who've had the misfortune to garner even the slightest hint of my attention.

A picnic it was not. Truths were exposed that shook me so hard I thought my teeth were gonna fall out and bounce around on the floor. Long periods of crunching data led to enlightenments which pointed directly to me being a monster. Not some Hollywood, growling, furry thing from another planet, but a soul-eating-baby-stomping-throat-slashing-bloodthirsty-terror-from-hell with nothing but ill intent toward all things living, like the monsters under the beds of children.

The nature of any monster is to generate fear, but when you see yourself as the monster you experience true fear for the first time.

My self loathing, hovering in the *top-ten* for so many years, skyrocketed to Numero Uno, #1 in my Mental Hit Parade giving PTSD a black eye in the process, planted it's flag and claimed the territory for eternity, pugnaciously glaring at my other thoughts defying them to challenge it.

The newly-introduced-smart-chunk of my brain, being driven by logic, was patiently watching my meltdown. It watched me flush people out of the underbrush and send them on their way for their own good. Offered Sage-like advice when necessary in alienating business associates, neighbors, family, strangers... ***I gave my cat away*** (which I loved dearly, but there MIGHT have been potential for my

influence on him to cause strife) I was so determined to isolate myself completely for the betterment of those trying to evolve while having an irregularly shaped 200lb block of iron chained to their waist — a deterrent of heinous proportion I would imagine.

Nope. If I was the thorn in humanities side there's a place inside me where I go to recharge, a place cain't nobody see. The place I come from lies dead-center in a pristine field of forgiveness and caring, lined with kindness, soft as chinchilla, as inviting as a bubble bath someone made special, just for you.

Once everything pointed to my toxic exterior as being more hazardous than I'd ever suspected, my base of operations whispered softly in my ear, suggesting I drag my rotting carcass out of the fucking way, pitch my common denominator hat in the nearest dumpster and high-tail it away from everyone I knew in a hurried manner. If they were going to recover in this lifetime, they needed to get started without further delay.

My recently acquired monster hat was a perfect fit and I agreed without hesitation. I took a moment to fortify myself, took a couple of deep breaths, soaked up the determination in the air and set about my charge.

I gotta tell ya — I did one hell of a job. I can get real aggressive and when I set out to accomplish something; I work that shit hard. This needed doing, it needed doing *right this god damned minute*, and by god, I was gonna knock it out of the park.

If I were a monster, I'd take full responsibility — do what was necessary. It was a “*damn the torpedoes*” kinda deal and *those* fuckers better give me a wide berth or somebody's gonna end up cryin' like a little girl; everybody knows monsters don't do much crying.

As long as they're never seen or heard from again, problem solved — *The End*. I've been known to solve a few problems in my time and I'd solve this one in a big fuckin' hurry or die trying.

The ease with which I cleared the decks shouldn't have surprised me but it did. Few took an additional shove but it was never anything drastic. Some hung around just so they could watch me twist in the wind, tossed little obstacles in my way, prayed to their pitiful gods for me to fail.

All I really had to do was be myself and in a few minutes I'd assume whomever I was interacting with understood my inner thoughts and shared my belief systems. I HAVE a belief system but couldn't define it if a gun were pointed at my head.

## **Stride established**

I'd been starved for affection for as long as I can remember. If someone showed the slightest sign they may understand me through some osmotic miracle, might quickly and easily relate to the next obscure John Waters reference I casually tossed out, I wouldn't even take the time to run a few quick tests to ascertain their level of comfort.

Finding *myself* at ease, based only on the desire to be so, I'd throw wide the gates to the kingdom, cast any shred of self consciousness aside and WHAMMO — I'd say something so odd, something so easily misconstrued as possibly sinister I was assured of never hearing from them again, 'them' being the

person's I'd chosen as worthy companions based in the fact and/or illusion they'd said something to me, something like "Excuse me," when our shopping carts slightly brushed against each other.

It's wonderful what you can accomplish when you surrender to the universe and let it do what needs doing — I'd just show up and relax — kinda like having a government job. Seriously, it was very comparable to how real artists do their trip.

The solitude took a while to become balanced. I knew it was coming and the universe had agreed to help which I took as a sign I was doing the right thing. I dedicated and re-dedicated myself to the effort daily, was vigilant around my tendency to backslide, took to seeing the group referred to as "*humans*" in the same light I see ex-girlfriends — I'd find myself with the phone in my hand about to call her, dig deep and find the strength to remember what a bitch she turned out to be and how pathetically I clung to her when it was time for her to move her cute little fanny on down the road — I was certain there'd never be another.

There's always another, but not anymore. I don't wanna get into the celibacy thing right now, suffice to say its been firmly in place for a year.

When the, "*Hey, how ya doin?*" query presents itself I've grown very comfortable in saying, "My business with the humans has been concluded. All necessary data has been exchanged, and the need for further interfacing is no longer. The time I have left to suffer the grotesque offerings of Planet Toxic, are mine to do with as I please. Your services are no longer required, and I offer my sincere thanks for your participation. That being said, you are hereby excused." It's my current all-purpose answer.

Sound rude? Not in my case. Honest, straight to the point with no loose ends left dangling. People that don't watch Television seem to appreciate it. Drunks too. The connection escapes me.

Strayed there for a bit... Sorry.

*(...Monsters, solitude, recharging, chatting with my ultra-patient-recently-awakened-sensibility-monitor...)*

Alrighty then.

I could tell by the change in his tone, my reasoning-nugget was pleased with the proceedings, hinted that I'd made progress in the right direction. His guard was dropping, his snark becoming less biting which eventually led to *the conversation*.

## Coffee break

The big question has always been, "*What the fuck?*" That all-encompassing, open-ended, universally understood inquiry, which can render a response worthy of consideration wherein there's an honest person involved in the discussion willful enough to make it clear, bullshit will not be tolerated.

Me and my head-meat were face to face, and there was no mistaking the bent of my agenda.

Months of preparation, a year of rasslin' with answers I sho-nuff didn't wanna hear, but I sucked it up,

checked in with my dormant sperm generation system regularly to see if they still had my back and was assured they were on the job, testosteroning themselves silly. You ignore those guys long enough, and they eventually stop whining like fat, spoiled children and get focused on something other than *Cruisin' for Pussy with Jesus* on Saturday nights. I thanked them regularly for not falling off and making their way to the nearest Old-Dude-Friendly tavern featuring scantily clad waitresses.

So I'd asked for the bottom line. We'd covered every subject, all the subsets, logged the data, cross referenced, done extensive *Statistical Process Control Analysis* (ever seen a *scatter plot*? Wild stuff!), asked **The Man In The Street**, did Google searches, tried to get an audience with Carl Sagan for a month before we were informed he's been worm food for a bit — it wasn't so much of an embarrassment as a disappointment.

They don't call it the reasoning center because of it's tendency to disregard socks as actual clothing. When he saw the look on my face, my posture, the longing in my eyes, he held up his hand in a “just a sec” gesture, warmed up our coffees and handed me a smoke, motioned with a facial gesture that I should get comfy which I did with some difficulty.

I'm not sure my eyes had ever been more open. My auditory and olfactory senses were picking up a spider under the house taking a crap. I forced my exterior to assume a relaxed facade, but I felt as if several amperes of alternating current were being applied directly to my sphincter. *His Holiness* was about to wax prophetic as I sat in a state of darshan, a blank page about to contain carefully crafted words of wisdom, written in sanskrit glyphs using a microscopic camel hair brush and dark blue ink. I was the plebeian amoeba awaiting an aeon's worth of evolution to rain down upon me, giving me knowledge, burning off the clouds of confusion that had been obscuring my view of the glories of the universe since the beginning of time. My testicles were retracted in what I can only assume was a state of fear and preparedness. My toes were clenched inside my boots, like a teenage boy having his first orgasm and relenting to chimpanzee ancestral instinct: *Hold onto something — this is important — you shouldn't fall out of the tree right now.*

I took a drag, inhaled deeply and expelled a thick cloud of light blue tobacco residue that had been relieved of it's toxins, put my hand on my coffee cup, and gave the slightest of a shrug, a barely perceptible raise of my right eyebrow and our eyes were locked. There was an undeniable hint of a grin on his face...

*“People don't think before they speak.*

*As a species, their listening abilities are weak.*

*You shouldn't feel so alone — every person out there holds a position of utter insignificance, as in, you aren't 'prioritized' in any way by others. Yer kinda on yer own, ya know?*

*Humans prefer assumption to inquiry.”*

He lit a cigarette without breaking eye contact, a calm washed over him as did silence.

## Melee

My left testicle whispered to my right, "What did he say?" To which the right responded, "Not real sure. Sounded pretty cryptic."

When a substance called nitrous-oxide is introduced into a fossil fuel burning power source, is combined with the refined and distilled dinosaur goop we call gasoline, the mixture turns the heat from the burning of gas in a measured and controlled way that maximizes the output of the power source, while insuring said source doesn't rip itself to shreds while doing so, into, in layman's terms, *Godzilla, with an unusually high dose of methamphetamine being introduced into his bloodstream* over a period of, oh I dunno, a nanosecond?

Said gasoline driven power source now has the ability to level Tokyo, and has just enough time to get it done before it self destructs. I mention this phenomenon of chemical interactions as it's the nearest reality based occurrence comparable to what my mind realized was about to transpire and a nanosecond sure as shit isn't much time to prepare.

Well over a year, and *Rip VanWinkle* hits me with four sentences. Fine. Lovely. Terrific.

Rip hadn't necessarily proven to be the model of stoicism, but Godzilla, in his mad, flailing dash thru the insufficiently sized corridors of my gray matter, accessing data but not taking the time to process it, managed to recall the presence of the grin on Rip's face of a few moments previous as being a fairly regular occurrence since his arrival.

Tidbits of info, leapt from their filing cabinets, wildly gesticulating, striving to get Godzilla's attention as he tore around up there like the Tasmanian Devil of cartoon fame, as in, much, much faster than the lumbering rubber suit we'd grown so fond of..

Little vignettes from my past were quickly scripted and hurriedly reenacted as he uncontrollably convulsed while running faster than you might imagine a giant reptile capable, leaving a trail of dino-drool and excrement in his wake which fucked with his footing more and more with each lap.

There was Angela, as if fleeing Satan, bouncing from the bed and charging out of the house after I offered her a drink of water in a way that somehow made her unreasonably uncomfortable.

My progeny at the age of 10 making it very clear they now considered me the village idiot.

My first wife, 18 the day I met her, pretty as a Lotus Blossom Calendar, was 18 again and didn't feel the need to wriggle by way of attracting our scaly detective's attentions. The scene my mind was presenting to Godzilla had added a thought balloon above her which had gone unnoticed upon our meeting, containing a detailed flowchart showing the basic plan of how she was going to use me (not *ME* me, just some generic knucklehead) as a tool to deliver her from a land-locked geographical region of openly dull persons, then cruelly discard me and continue to cut a wide swath of angst as she made her way to a *geographic dullard repository* with an ocean.

My bandmate withdrawing from contract negotiations after 10 years of dedicated toil to get there, purely for spite.

My various employers, all in one group, leering, menacing, brandishing weapons.

My parents and siblings glaring at me, disapproving, judgmental, pushy, manipulative, delusional in all

respects.

The oblate spheroid of my recently divorced wife employing her *#1-GO-TO-passive-aggressive-mechanism*, looking at Godzilla, wide-eyed, trembling as she sputtered in her most *please-oh-god-please* voice, expecting, wanting, *needing* sympathy like a junkie needs a fix, “*I love you...*” and waiting impatiently, tears welling up, for him to respond in kind, thus insuring her status as having worth.

When the tear rolled down my face, it was perfectly timed to mesh with Godzilla succumbing to a short circuit of the type only experienced my reptilian nuclear waste mutations loaded up on meth. I felt the tear on my cheek, felt Godzilla simultaneously stiffen, clutch his chest and crash to the ground. If my life were just a tad more cartoonish, a puff of green smoke would have come out of my ears.

I hadn't realized it, but eye contact between myself and my *reasoning self*, had not waned as the reaction to his four sentences took hold, figuratively ground my face into a pillow filled with broken glass shards and, as is required when intentionally drowning a person, I was held there until my body went limp; forced to surrender — made to comply.

It was dark out. The ashtray next to Mr. Thinks-a-lot was overflowing. My educated guess, was it couldn't have been much longer than 18 to 24 hours. Not sure. I hadn't pissed myself, and used that as the yardstick to measure how long I'd endured the “*Gila Monster Hi-Jinx Review*” that just went down between my ears.

He rose, grabbed the coffee cups, headed toward the kitchen and said without looking back, “Warm up?”

## **An estranged link**

I'd been the eyes of Godzilla during his episode. He was just doing what comes natural to those that suffer a meth overdose but I was taking notes. He croaked, I hadn't and I had a scribe's tablet full of hieroglyphics to prove it.

A wild scrawl depicting surreal events based in S. LaRue-reality only I could decipher, needed to be analyzed. Surprisingly, a single translation, really more of a quick skim, rendered a golden thread holding them together, placing them solidly and without question, as the illusive Alchemist's component in the equation needed if meaningful, successful relationships are something you assign value.

Case by case when scrutinized, although observed in a rapid blur of presentations, bore out those throwing themselves into the perilous path of a scale-covered-comedically-oversized-speedfreak, did so intentionally. My mind doesn't much care for me but my brain is a different animal and offered a well organized report after taking a moment to crack the code around the four sentences.

Every situation, every nuance, body language, eye movement, clothing, sonic signature, the set lighting, right down to the tempo of the verbiage all lent themselves to me instinctually tilting my head back 15 degrees and seeing an automobile sized, flashing magenta neon sign I'd never seen in my head before, containing the single word, “**MISCOMMUNICATION**” (Helvetica Bold) which of course had



been the defining downfall of each botched attempt to imply myself into the realm of lasting, beneficial relationships.

The *communication quotient* is a complex little bastard all by it's lonesome. If it doesn't have all it's broncos in the same corral it'll just end up feeling incomplete, stirring the campfire with a stick and watchin' the sun go down on another wasted day. There's about a million other piddly little things that have to be considered, equations that need resolution with the result being applied to yet another pre-equation, and on and on, until the big logarithm has to be hammered out which is where the communication deal wears the biggest hat at the rodeo.

## **The embedding procedure, it's origins, the law of averages and the part chance plays in everyone's lives, every moment, of every day**

*Note: This is gonna take a minute but its important, so just hang with me for a bit...*

It's worth mentioning I was 5 in 1960 and had developed an unreasonable attraction to all things musical.

My grandfather knew Bob Wills, partied with him, traveled around the Texas Panhandle in a sort of *Roadie, Drinking-Buddy, Fight-Monitoring Regional Manager* in Bob's side business, ***“Raising Hell Incorporated.”***

He'd play country music records for me, if pestered long enough and it weren't a buncha Yahoos sportin' brightly-colored, ironed shirts, skin tight Levis, shark skin boots, new guitars and \$1000 hat's that had never seen the sun. It was usually someone my grandfather knew or had met, which meant he'd possibly beaten them with a pool cue for looking at him “funny” after he'd been drinking grain alcohol, seasoned with Red-Hots candy, non-stop for a 3 or 4 day period. It was part of his job description when he was “*working*” for Mr. Wills.

He'd somehow ended up with an assortment of obscure records and I liked all of them. They seemed real, honest, like the performers were in the next room waiting on dinner and as fate would have it, there was a guitar sitting there not doing a damn thing. Some guy wearing overalls and covered in field-hand-dust picked it up and started strumming and singing — no big deal, it just kinda happened.

I'd learn the lyrics but didn't have a clue it was a story or a message of some kind. I just liked trying to sing along.

My parents, in their late 20s, listened to *Adult Contemporary* style music, usually the radio. Living in the Texas Panhandle meant Mr. Presley was represented more often than necessary. Hell, at that time an Elvis overdose could have probably been suffered in remote Eskimo villages. I learned the lyrics, sang along, thought he was just dandy.

About '62, '63, somewhere around then, the Brit's began dropping by with this whole new thing that was somehow connected to unkept hair which tends to confuse 8 year olds. I loved the way it sounded, thought they all looked like they were enjoying themselves.

I saw them as amusing, clever and was certain their quirks, both musical and visual, were due to some absurdly inept barber being regularly outwitted and the joy they derived by denying him his livelihood.

I imagined him lurking nearby, scissors at the ready.

My parents were angry at these fellas. My guess was they knew the dopey barber, had taken it personally he wasn't able to buy a new Ford based solely on a handful of young people, from England no less, taking a pass when it came time for their weekly visit to the crew-cut store. At the first sign of our radio belching out a few tea-soaked-twangy-guitar chops, my parents became visibly shaken.

Their dislike for it was probably incentive for me to listen closer because that's what I did. I didn't know it at the time but the music had been influenced by American Rhythm and Blues artists. I was later told, once those jungle beats wriggle their way into a few shacks around the Panhandle in the guise of white music, pandemonium would soon follow. I just shrugged my shoulders and listened more intently. 8 year olds crave chaos — who knows? It could be my ticket to something other than baseball, fishing and yard work?

What were those country singers saying in every single one of those songs? Elvis was talking about it too, and I'll be fucked if the Barber-Evasion-Corps wasn't constantly referring to the exact same thing! I was 10 or 11 when it came into focus — I had to re-think everything — a common theme during my brief visit to Earth, as it turns out.

The message being hammered into listeners, being placed in our collective mind with pleasing melody and harmony, aided by the subterfuge of adopting an outward appearance that had somehow been calculated to garner the acceptance of certain age groups, specific geographical regions, and who-the-fuck-knows what else, went into coercing these fairly talented people, these widely accepted entertainers adored by throngs of fans around the world to deliver a repeating, unavoidable message: *Every aspect of human relationships, especially those of a romantic nature, were either starting to cave in, were currently in peril and would later, without question, go off the rails.* Doom in three part harmony. Plain and simple.

Someone was gonna cry and the message was; *the crying was someone else's fault!* Blame had arrived.

Anarchy was now piloting the bus which happened to be loaded with would-be lovers, headed off a cliff at break-neck speed. Pleading for reason to step up to the plate and make some sense outta the whole deal, I got chopped off at the knees, was told, “We're real sorry pal, but there's nothing we can do about it. It ALWAYS ends like this.”

I don't know how but I'd bet my last nickel Karl Rove was behind it.

Suave-Dude-Elvis lived at the end of *Lonely Street* but hid it from everyone by wearing a leering dumbass grin and had some trick up his sleeve that diverted your attention to his grease-ball hairdo. The damned thing was ALWAYS perfectly askew. Once he got a taste of the Beatles his whole scene changed dramatically and he became a caricature of himself out of fear. The “Yeh, Yeh, Yeh” brigade was gonna stomp his honky ass and he knew it. Guess he was too ignorant to realize stuffing handfuls of pills into that golden throat wasn't gonna cure his ills. Don't mean to sound cruel but that boy shoulda called it a day the moment the Jail House Rock sequence was filmed, edited and in the can. He became an intolerably-self-absorbed-puppet afterwards. Everyone has weaknesses, even the King.

Bob Wills and the boys couldn't keep a gal around for much longer than a few days or so they crooned in every single song. That one I sort of made peace with, found a way to understand due to their questionable activities, what I suspected they were doing at that very moment and, understanding the

following day would be filled with drunken cowboy revelry at the expense of those unfortunate enough to frequent any number of dance halls with sawdust on the floors and a bartender with a medical degree for patching up the wounded.

Doctor / Bartender is still a common moniker in the barren, cruel plains of North Texas. Constant wind, due to the lack of geographical features, over time, makes people pretty touchy. Throw a few drinks into the mix and next thing ya know the bartender is stitching up a nasty gash while dodging airborne furniture caused by a ruckus that's still under way and will continue until everyone is plum tuckered out.

Trying to get the militia to drop by yer watering hole in Fritch at 1am Monday morning, probably won't happen. They know the drill and the jail there only has the one cell. It's *Fritch* — fuckem. If it was in Dalhart that's a whole different matter — folks around there work WAY too god damned hard for literally no money at all and when tempers flare, it wouldn't surprise anyone if there were dead bodies to sort out. They'd get out of bed for Dalhart.

The Mop Top Troupe from across the pond had geared their sound to what they'd heard coming from unrecognized and under-appreciated American soul music artists and were just parroting back the message they thought people wanted to hear. Overnight there were a thousand new groups, formed by American kids wanting a piece of that shaggy-appearance-based record sales money and we were off to the races.

Broken hearts, acts of violence, jealousy, deception, cruelty, regret, pleading, loneliness, infidelity, fear, desperation, even murder were all possible components of a successful song, a song played over and over and over on the radio causing millions of impressionable kids to purchase the recording so they could hammer the negative messages into their minds. If they ever had opportunity to feel good about themselves they could quickly reverse such silliness by flipping a switch, setting the record player to “repeat” and let it run until the feeling passed so they could get back to the business of focusing on how to sabotage their interactions with others.

I've only recently figured out my whole approach to relationships is based in those messages. Based in a belief that sooner or later, usually sooner, shit was gonna head South. From the moment a relationship even *suggested* itself, a part of me packed it's bags, grabbed the bus to El Paso and was stationed at the border waiting to snap a photo of said relationship racing into Mexico, fleeing some horrible atrocity that had transpired between myself and someone crazy enough to imagine a lasting union is within the grasp of **anyone**. Mexico has room for strangers and plenty of Chiclets to go 'round – BONUS!

Looking back, the women I've had relationships with were from the same era and I can now see why they acted the way they did from time to time. That fucking music, which I still love dearly but for different reasons, had put it's fingerprints on them too.

The age we live in allows the music industry to fill every space, every car, house, place of business, even the outdoors with whatever they think will sell the most records and brother, I'm here to tell ya there's BIG money in promoting the expectation of disaster. The entertainment biz, news providers, adults you trusted as a kid, television imagery, advertising, all that shit spoke to your fear, nudged it awake, gave it coffee and yellow pills, kept testing you until you gave in and agreed, that, “Yes, everything is fucked up and it's gonna get worse when I fall for some gal and I'll be close to death when she takes off with my best friend.”

***That's.  
How.  
It.  
Works.  
Every.  
Single.  
Time.  
Right kid?***

Yessir.

## **Solve for X — show your work**

Coming to the conclusion I'd given my all when it came to establishing meaningful relationships, while I was simultaneously sabotaging them with part of my brain that had been taught the art of stealth, kinda put a kink in my hose. It's absolutely no bullshit whatsoever pop music had a big hand in it.

Digging to the core of the Earth with your bare hands goes a lot quicker if you put a song in your heart and the songs driving me toward the chewy nougat center of our home planet were the songs of my youth. “*I Need You*” by the Beatles, off the *HELP* album, released in '65 (I was 10) is done at a tempo, as it turns out is just about perfect for establishing a respectable pace when slamming your blistered and bleeding fingertips into solid ground, which in my case was me digging my own grave. The lyrics to that one are sweet torment, just what an aching heart needs; reassurance that everything sho-nuff is NOT gonna be alright.

Early conversations with He-of-the-cryptic-senetnces were difficult, time consuming, and demanded my full attention. The first three months were spent sitting and starrng into space for days at a time. My brain was churning like an angry ocean, but my body was static, and when I ran out of data crunching energy, I'd sleep. When I say sleep, I mean it. I'd whip my thinky-parts so hard, for so long, sleeping 12, 16 even 20 hours wasn't unusual.

Waking up was just a signal to assume the position, start pouring over the info again looking for answers, clues, any god damn thing at all I could use as a sign post to direct me toward the next hint, the next seven-way intersection, where I'd have to sit and eventually decide which of the paths might lead somewhere useful. But no matter how long I thought about it, the path I'd choose would lead to another absurd intersection which required my devoting a few days to figure out which direction to go.

I was busier than a cat coverin' up shit on a marble floor, but my body was of absolutely no use to me. All the action was upstairs, so after three months of running my synapse at top speed and leaving my flesh to it's own devices, *The Organ's Union* had a secret meeting, a vote was taken and with a 94 to 6 landslide victory, preparations were made to go on strike. How my testicles convinced 4 other body parts to vote “nay” on the strike, I'll never know.

## **An unfortunate break in the action**

When I could force myself into the shower I'd be winded afterward from the simple act of washing off the crust that had built up on the exterior of my body. I was afraid to peel an orange as the effort may have caused me to faint from exhaustion. I wasn't eating, I'd long ago, well, 12 months or so, knocked off the boozing, seldom took the medications carelessly prescribed by alleged Mental Health Professionals... I was busy goddamit!

Body and mind being separate entities can often find themselves at odds and the way my body chose to demand my attention was by generating a blood clot of the type which, more often than not, finds its way to your brain, clogs a main fluid line and kills you — BOOM — right then and there, yer dead. No warning given, your body has had enough of your bullshit, gets pissed off and kills you. Ha Ha Ha! REEEEALLL funny!

Since leaving home at 15 I'd developed a regimen of doing my best not to eat food laced with poison, very little animal flesh, took vitamins religiously, even did a couple of stints as a vegetarian and a four year period as a raw vegan. Give that shit a try and see how it goes. I studied up and did it right, so it worked for me, problem being, living on organic, fair trade foods ONLY is surprisingly cost prohibitive.

That the blood clot stopped in my lung as opposed to heading straight for the *Desert Eagle 0.45 Magnum 13 Round Semi-automatic hand cannon* waiting for it in my brain was an act of kindness and understanding on my body's part — it was showing its appreciation for my taking pretty good care of it and stopped its mission just short of taking me out, tapped me on the shoulder, said, “Hi! Remember me?”

So in the early phases of my trying to get to the bottom of things, I was forced into a lengthy hospital stay. Pulmonary Embolisms are taken quite seriously by the medical community and all manner of absurd activities were assigned your humble narrator when they finally turned me loose.

As one that may have known me for any length of time, you'll ascertain exactly what I did with my list of malady remedies to be personally undertaken. I ignored them. The project at hand, the discovery of just what the fuck was housed in my now ailing body, carried more import than peeling an orange sans loss of consciousness.

## Unexpected

I'm not known for being patient, am in fact considered hyper by the community at large. To find Ronnie-the-Reasoning-Gray-Matter-Dude in a lawn chair outside my front door, casually flipping through a coffee-table book of surrealism images, sipping apple juice and chain smoking when I returned from the hospital caught me off guard. “How goes it Ace? Ya look a bit peaked. Ya ready to tackle those donuts? They ain't gonna make themselves ya know?” What a smart-ass.

Though there had been an extended period of inactivity around the discoveries referred to herein, I agreed and we went back to work. That he was waiting there for me leads me to believe my patience resides in my reasoning center. Good to know its up there somewhere, even if it had been relatively dormant for 57 years.

## **Debrief**

Content of this missive being considered, analysis with the intent of establishing a level of success was required. I'd done the wrong thing so many times to so many people, had undertaken even more scatter-shot endeavors proving harmful to myself, assurances around that bullshit coming to an end needed to be assessed. To think the last 16 months had been spent getting absolutely nowhere demanded either acceptance, which indicated the process needed to be repeated and include a few adjustments, or concluding the mission had been accomplished, the monster properly and securely caged, de-clawed, eunuched and given sedatives on request without fail.

A step back in time had to happen; a look at my the past was imperative. Taking stock of where I'd ended up in the present needed to be compared to where I was when the mission began.

When adding my atrocities to Column A, my reasoning self would quickly add an act of kindness to Column B. By the time it slowed to a halt it sure looked like a draw to me.

Again, Mr. Ronald Reason had waited until the time was right, waited until I'd sufficiently beaten myself to a bloody pulp and accepted the thoroughly-trounced-by-my-own-hand-monster as my true self, before pointing out that I had the potential to be somewhat less menacing and he had proof to back up his claims. There they were stacked up in Column B.

Even though compiling the lists had left me in a brightened mood as it was the first activity I'd undertaken in well over a year that I found pleasant, I was left wondering if my 16 month trial by fire had really been necessary. That shit-storm had been like having all your teeth pulled by a sadist. I gave my other self a quizzical glance.

I'd never seen a disbelieving scowl on his face before, but it appeared and remained until I closed my eyes and shook my head in agreement, muttered, "I know, I know..." under my breath.

## **Cessation of desire, acceptance and new shoes for my Noggin-Chimp**

The next day Mr. Know-it-all was nowhere to be found. I'd grown fond of having him to converse with, appreciated his cunning in pointing out the obvious in such a round-about way. At first I was kinda pissed at him for waiting so long to wake his ass up and lend a hand. Once we'd worked out some solutions though, I completely understand why he let me stumble around fucking shit up at every opportunity.

I wondered if he'd resumed his slumber upon rejoining the rest of me up there and was reassured he'd be on the job for the time being, when he reached over and poked my eardrum letting me know he was indeed awake.

By comparison, I felt the way I imagine I'd feel if I'd been restoring a 1971 Mustang in my garage as a solo project; the body is now pristine, interior back to original, chassis and frame all returned to factory spec, even the cheezy little wheel covers it had when it was driven off the lot were procured and in place.

Today I fired up the 429 and it was purring like a kitten, begging to roam the streets in search of GM products to make fools out of. The years of work, thousands of hours out in the garage, turning wrenches, busting my knuckles, the swearing, those times when I had to take a couple of months off and rethink my approach, the exhilaration of finally finding the right tail light lenses in a junk yard in Florida for 14 bucks, all that I'd worked toward now realized as the engine said hello for the first time, begs the question, “**Now what?**”

A '71 Mustang is a thing of beauty, a work of art to those of us open-minded enough to see it as something besides snazzy transportation. I only use it as an example of metamorphosis, do not consider myself art or a thing of beauty. The commonality between myself and a restored classic vehicle is that neither of us are what we once were. The Mustang is reborn, ready for the street. I am encased in titanium. The only similarity is the degree of change that has taken place. When a change of this magnitude is realized, you're left with making your next move — just what are your intentions concerning what's to be done with this “*thing*” you have that only slightly resembles what you had to begin with?

Another similarity between myself and a restored muscle car is the potential to do harm, not to mention it's fragility. Were I to take the Mustang for a drive, sooner or later its integrity would be compromised — maybe a fender-bender or a chip in the paint would appear while parked among other vehicles?

It's been in the garage for so long, why chance it? It's been overhauled to my satisfaction, what would be the point of crushing a few Chevy's simply to sate the car's ego with mine coming along for the ride? I believe I'll cover it with a tarp, leave it for someone to find when my home is poured over by pickers once my ashes have been tossed into the nearest sewage treatment plant.

Same goes for me. Puttin' on my monster hat and waitin' this little episode out. Won't be long. Time is relative.

## **Anthem of Distraction**

I've begun making use of my newly found/forced by my own hand free time. September is the month on the human calendar in which my handcrafted hole was complete. As September approached this last year, which was the first anniversary of my spectacular swan dive, I became kinda concerned about the result of my reliving the digging of the hole and the reasons behind doing so. Counting the days, remembering what had transpired during them, who'd been involved and how ridiculous my behavior had been, wasn't something I was looking forward to. Although I imagine those that were involved in some way would like nothing more than to watch me squirm thru September every year, cringing under the bed, tormented by demons of various sorts.

If I was going to see October I needed a plan. As I'm sure you've experienced, the making of a *plan* is a direct invitation for the universe to drop by and smash it as a simple reminder of your insignificance.

I was at a point in my relationship with the cosmos I relented, and sort of meekly asked to be guided yet again. I'd asked a lot of it in the last year; the “meek” part was as honest as the day is long. As per usual no answer was offered but the opportunity for surrender was at hand, and surrender I did.

Late in August I'd catch myself in the middle of some sort of creative project not remembering clearly how it had begun or how I'd gotten so much of it accomplished. If it was a music/sound experiment the screen would be filled with wave forms I recognized, sort of, but had no recall of how I'd derived them. I wasn't using instruments anymore and was altering everyday sounds into montages, short arrangements, some with a melody line and supporting sonic relatives, or just plain old noise that as it turned out, offered a depth of interpretations if listened to repeatedly.

As September splashed onto the calendar I was involved in the writing of any number of varying manuscripts, multimedia projects involving sounds or music I'd created and applied to video footage in a way I can only describe as experimental; reminiscent of what was happening at the peak of the Op-Art movement, maybe? I don't fucking know.

I'd sequestered myself. Unknowingly, been flung into a period of creativity. The amazing and wonderful aspect, plain as the moths in my wallet? I was driven by unseen hands. A project would happen, and I wouldn't be allowed to examine it often until a week later, sometimes longer.

I'd had brief interludes with what-ever-this-was when I was a musician, particularly in my youth. Trudging thru a song for the hundredth time, praying to Satan the drummer get's the back-up vocals right, *just this once*, it's time for you to do your 8 bars of improvisation. The drummer just nailed the vocal part and while you're stunned, not quite ready for your solo just yet, stupid kid that you were took a moment to be amazed, you hadn't noticed a diesel-powered, long-haul, high-speed locomotive entering your spine at top speed.

You and your instrument, now engulfed in flame, become one, only separating as 32 beats came to an end. Those around you are somehow different than they were moments before, you're drenched in sweat, there are three males, two females openly weeping at the edge of the stage, everyone is fucking smiling or gawking, there's blood (yours?) in dots around the pick guard of your guitar, the bass player exaggerates looking at his non-existent watch, you find yourself back in the song and the band brings it home.

Amidst all that the only question you can piece together is, "Underwear? Lacey undergarments – on the stage? Are they mine? What does this mean? Can I keep them? Do I WANT to keep them? What is the fate of all this underwear? WHY is there UNDERWEAR cluttering the stage for fuck's sake"

There were four more songs on the list and no one said a word when the band left the stage not to return. 32 beats had been abandoned, in more ways than one. Beats had become conceptual, replaced by time, minutes, as in 16.

That's what I'm talking about here, only now minutes have been invited to the concept table, replaced by hours and more often than not, days. You've had it happen to you in one way or another — if you've ever made anything there will be moments when that kinda shit happens.

40, 60, 80 hours of music, film and the written word, bouncing from genre to genre, often working on all three simultaneously because they'd all somehow become dependent on each other, would come together as components of a single project.

I had not seen my bed as anything other than a big shelf after I was released from the hospital. Where I'm sitting now, typing this up? This is where I exist. I eat here, pay my bills, work the projects like rented mules, curse at software, often think morning is evening and find I just can't be bothered with



the rates at which nearby planets are spinning – who fucking cares? And if you DID care, what difference would it make? Before starting this graph, I slept three hours right here at the desk – I'm awake now, anxious to try and get some of this shit finished up so I can listen to it, watch it, read it, repair or revise it or throw it away. Which of those things happens next ain't my call – all I know is, to recall a dumb-ass phrase, its time to make the donuts.

I'd been assigned a muse is all I can think of as the force behind what was happening. She'd leave me to do most of the prep work; gather or record sounds to be altered, find or create video footage to play with, scribble quick outlines of literary work I thought might be interesting to pursue.

She'd arrive without me knowing, and in a day or so I'd be left to examine the outcome of her visit. By the time I'd realize she had arrived we would be in the middle of something and I'd, momentarily, *know* I was NOT driving the bus, was effectively being used as her puppet, a marionette pushing buttons and pulling levers which, if she'd had a body, she'd be doing herself.

She'd scan the ideas in my head, alter them to her liking, shut my brain off, enter my body and assume the controls. Sometimes she gets going so fucking fast I can't keep up. It doesn't happen a lot but when she's in a mood and outpacing me, I've found I can remove myself from the frenzied activity and become a spectator. Fucking hilarious to watch.

I'm quite a bit more OCD than she is. If, quite suddenly she felt the work was good enough, or perhaps was called to join the hard-drinking Pixies, Muses and Fairies poker game back home, she'd drop everything and split, leaving a horrendous, half baked mess for me to try and wrestle into a more useable form.

Sound creations would be slightly out of sync, the sounds, most of which had been altered dramatically were showing signs of injury and were filled with pops and clicks I had to somehow fix or mask. Video projects were often in need of realigning, pans smoothed out between scenes, colors and effects made less obviously slammed together. The writing was the worst—her spelling, punctuation and grammar skills were appalling if not comedic and there was just enough “intent” on the page for me to figure out what she was trying to say and adjust it so humans could grasp whatever-the-hell I'd assume she was offering. *\*I just glanced at the ceiling, asked without speaking, “Is that about right?”*

As evidence for her existence grew, I'd invariably express my frustration, call out for her re-assert her place as Helms-woman, with silence being my reward. On subsequent visits she never gave the corrected projects a moment of her attention. They were in the past and she could not have cared less about where they'd ended up. What she wanted to do was more, more, more and to be real honest, I was left no choice but to snap out of it 20 hours later and take a look at the new batch of work I was going to be fixing.

It's turned into a sort of game; I laugh at her sloppy work when she'll finally allow it, and she laughs while at the controls making the mess. Our arrangement has settled into routine.

Back when she was first given my case, before we were on friendly terms and I was afraid of a month (namely September), when I noticed it was October 3<sup>rd</sup>, my appearance was nothing short of unkept, my place was a fucking disaster area, I was wearing my robe, had brought it out of a 10-year-top-priority-assignment as the main guard for the back of the closet. I had 20 surprisingly interesting projects in the *done* folder. Not sure I've ever truly experienced Gratitude before that day. I was crying and shit.

I know statements relating to having a relationship with something as obtuse as a muse proly lends itself to those that are of the opinion that I'm crackin' up, they're 100% correct in their assumption.

In that case I'm sure persons of that persuasion will love hearing my interactions with my muse have continued, intensified and I haven't gotten the impression she has plans to move on any time soon. My first successful relationship, and its with something most consider imaginary. How perfect is that? Any sort of **“That's BULLHIT!”** debate never really gets up a head of steam – I instantly agree with those that tell me it's all in my head. It's not a god damn religion – she ain't gonna spike me into a lava-bath for not standing up for she and I's relationship. **THAT** would be bullshit.

## The End

In summation; I spent 57 years unknowingly setting things on fire. I built a colossal store of inquiries I had no answers for. The time came for me to take a look at myself, acquire the answers come hell or high water.

The cosmos, tired of watching me squirm, rendered aid. Obvious conclusion: clear the decks, get out of the way, find a cave, set up housekeeping, follow the Hippocratic oath – *“if ya cain't hep somebody, at least don't hurt 'em!”*

*Do what you can* to further self-realization and if a mountain lion wants to share the cave you'll need to discuss it thoroughly prior to moving forward.

*Drop the bullshit* – be honest – if others take it as anything other than what you really mean, that's on them, so be clear, no fluff allowed.

My Noggin-Chimp *can NOT wear the shoes of another.*

*Go forward* and create. Do what you love or fuck off.

I will stumble along the way. There is much to learn. My heart is open as well as my mind.

Alone is a good thing, a necessary tool.

I will continually generate my wishes for all that have been hurt by me to recover quickly.

If you're reading this I proly know you, you proly knew the Steve LaRue everyone was accustom to, harmed by and left to fend for themselves once I'd had my fill. As compensation for my lack of humanity the keys to the Mustang are in my Beatle Boots in the small closet, under that pile of dusty art supplies. She's got a-couple-hundred-thousand-miles in her if ya treat her right.

Name's Linda.

## ***A suggestive addendum:***

- Might be a good idea to start taking honest communication seriously. It's the only tool humans have should they care to understand each other.
- Don't be afraid, talk all the time, ask questions, say exactly what you mean, listen closely.
- Make no assumptions and don't take things others say personally.
- Just in case there's a break-down in what electricity thinks it should be doing, takes a powder and is somehow negated from our cultures, more primitive forms of communication will come in pretty handy – the kind where ya gotta see somebody or hear 'em to know what they're tryin to say. I plan to fill my remaining time studying these long abandoned methods. *If done with a little finesse semaphore is a beautiful thing.*

## **Footnotes:**

x: The **I Hate Steve LaRue Club** is not a literary device – it is an actual club. There are few members, **not** due to a lack of people disliking Mr. LaRue; existing members in good standing don't want to share the joys they reap thru activities involving their shared loathing. Having a group to belong to is often worth dedicating some energy to, like a bowling league or a psychiatric collective forming a clinic dealing with the specifics required in helping the rich keep their greed in check (\$100,000 a minute for a consultation) or the ***“Shiners of New Orleans,”*** a personal favorite of mine. I've witnessed them in action only once, but have been assured by long standing New Orleans residents, this youth group has been secretly thriving since the 1950s. Originality is something I value and found it in spades when I witnessed six of them tackle a man wearing a full-blown-top-to-bottom, tan leather ensemble; boots, gloves – the works.